

Cromwell letter to John Bradshaw

Letter to John Bradshaw

(1649)

by Oliver Cromwell

- related portals: Letters.

Oliver Cromwell was commanding the New Model Army in Ireland, John Bradshaw was President of the Council of State the executive branch of the government of the Commonwealth of England. This letter covers the infamous storming of Drogheda

- Carlyle cites as a source: Whitelocke p.412: See below an 1853 edition of Whitelocke pp. 110,111 ^[1]
- Carlyle: "Drogheda" is Oliver's spelling; contrary to what was then usual, almost universal.
- Caryle: The "Sir Edmund Varney" who perished here was the son of the Standard-bearer at Edgehill. For Sir Arthur Ashton see Clarendon. Poor Sir Arthur had a wooden leg which the soldiers were very eager for, understanding it to be full of gold coin; but it proved to be mere timber: all his gold, 200 broad pieces, was sewed into his belt, and scrambled for when that came to light. There is in *Wood's Life* ^[2] an old-soldier's account of the Storm of Tredah, sufficiently emphatic, by Tom Wood, Anthony's brother, who had been there."

References

- Carlyle, Thomas (1861), *Oliver Cromwell's letters and speeches: with elucidations*, Volumes I & II, Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1861 Volume II, Part V, pp. 164,168 ^[3]. Letter CV
- Carlyle, Thomas (1868). *Oliver Cromwell's letters and speeches: including the supplement to the first edition*, Volume 1, Harper & brothers pp. 380,381 ^[4]
- Whitlocke, Bulstrode, *Memorials of the English affairs from the beginning of the reign of Charles the First to the happy restoration of King Charles the Second*, Volume: 3, Oxford University Press, 1853

To the Honorable John Bradshaw, Esquire, President of the Council of State: These.

'Dublin,' 16th September, 1649

Sir,

It hath pleased God to bless our endeavors at Drogheda. After battery, we stormed it. The Enemy were about 3,000 strong in the Town. They made a stout resistance ; and near 1,000 of our men being entered, the Enemy forced them out again. But God giving a new courage to our men, they attempted again, and entered; beating the Enemy from their defences.

The Enemy had made three retrenchments, both to the right and left 'of' where we entered; all which they were forced to quit. Being thus entered, we refused them quarter; having the day before summoned the Town. I believe we put to the sword the whole number of the defendants. I do not think Thirty of the whole number escaped with their lives. Those that did, are in safe custody for the Barbadoes. Since that time, the Enemy quitted to us Trim and Dundalk. In Trim they were in such haste that they left their guns behind them.

This hath been a marvellous great mercy. The Enemy, being not willing to put an issue upon a field-battle, had put into this Garrison almost all their prime soldiers, being about 3,000 horse and foot, under the command of their best officers; Sir Arthur Ashton being made Governor. There were some seven or eight regiments, Ormond's being one, under the command of Sir Edmund Varney. I do not believe, neither do I hear, that any officer escaped with his life, save only one Lieutenant, who, I hear, going to the Enemy said, That he was the only man that escaped of all the Garrison. The Enemy upon this were filled with much terror. And truly I believe this bitterness will save much effusion of blood, through the goodness of God.

I wish that all honest hearts may give the glory of this to God alone, to whom indeed the praise of this mercy belongs. ' As' for instruments, they were very inconsiderable the work throughout.

[He then gives an account of his purpose for Wexford and concludes]

Captain Brandly did with forty or fifty of his men very gallantly storm the Tenalias; for which he deserves the thanks of the State.

'I rest,' Your most humble servant,

Oliver Cromwell.

References

- [1] <http://www.archive.org/stream/memorialsfengli03whituoft#page/110/mode/1up/search/Drogheda>
 - [2] <http://www.archive.org/details/woodslifetimes01claruoft>
 - [3] <http://books.google.com/books?id=NXMNAAAAIAAJ&pg=RA1-PA164#v=onepage&q&f=false>
 - [4] <http://books.google.com/books?id=uObhAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA380#v=onepage&q&f=false>
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